

6 March 2007

## **Jailed Ex-Khmer Rouge Prison Chief Hit with New Charges**

PHNOM PENH — The only surviving Khmer Rouge leader in custody is to face fresh criminal charges in a bid to stop him going free before Cambodia's genocide trials begin, a military court official said Monday.

Former Khmer Rouge prison chief Kaing Guek Iev, also known as Duch, must be released by November 2008 if the country's long-stalled genocide trials are not underway by then, military court chief Ney Thol told AFP.

"If there is no trial for him, he cannot be detained beyond November 10, 2008," said Ney Thol.

Duch, who ran the Khmer Rouge's notorious Tuol Sleng prison during the regime's 1975-79 rule, was arrested in 1999 on charges of genocide.

He was charged in 2002 with crimes against humanity as authorities sought to keep him detained amid floundering efforts to establish a Khmer Rouge tribunal.

The military court last week charged him with war crimes, Ney Thol said.

Under Cambodian law, he can only be detained without trial for three years on each charge, or a total of nine years since the date of his arrest, Ney Thol said.

While the United Nations and Cambodia agreed to a tribunal framework in 2003, the process is again in question as foreign and Cambodian jurists fight over internal rules that govern the trials.

Trials were initially expected to begin in mid-2007, but delays have pushed back the start date until next year, tribunal officials say.

Up to two million people died of starvation, overwork and execution under the Khmer Rouge, which abolished religion, property rights, currency and schools.

Duch, who is thought to be 64 years old, is widely believed to have been instrumental in the regime's security apparatus.

While he has claimed to have only been following higher orders, Duch's tenure at Tuol Sleng saw the deaths of as many as 17,000 men, women and children, most of whom were brutally tortured before being killed.

His lawyer, Kar Savuth, confirmed Monday that the new charges had been filed against his client, saying: "When the detention period has reaches its end, (Duch) must be released on bail."

Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot died in 1998, and several other top cadres live freely in Cambodia.

But the death last year of military commander Ta Mok, who was the only other person arrested for crimes committed during the regime, has heightened fears that other ageing leaders could die before facing justice.

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